

Pacific Pride

For the Families of Marines and Sailors of the Command Element



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11th MEU offers Childcare Vouchers

Eleventh Marine Expeditionary Unit families will soon be eligible to receive childcare vouchers intended to provide relief to mothers or fathers while their spouses are deployed.

The vouchers can be used in two ways.

First, they can be used at the Camp Pendleton Fischer Center. Each voucher is worth up to four hours of free childcare for one child.

Second, vouchers can be redeemed for cash at Marine Corps Community Services check cashing locations. Each voucher is worth \$12 and should only be used to pay for childcare.

Check cashing locations include: 13 Area Country Store, 14 Area Deluz, 31 Area Stuart Mesa, 20 Area Wire Mountain, 21 Area Del Mar and 51 Area Seaside Plaza.

Details concerning distribution are currently being finalized with plans for the vouchers to be distributed prior to deployment.



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Visit us on the Internet:

<http://www.11meu.usmc.mil>

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From the Commanding Officer



The past month has been an eventful and busy time for the 11th MEU. We are now well into our workup cycle, and 11th MEU Marines and Sailors are

quickly and aggressively preparing for the upcoming deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf regions. Exercises here at Camp Pendleton and on ship will take your spouses, family members and friends away for several days at a time, and I ask for your patience and understanding of the value this training provides.

In the last family newsletter, I spoke about my commitment to the safety of 11th MEU Marines and Sailors. I am also committed to providing the best training possible to prepare the MEU for this next deployment. I can ensure you that time away during the work-up period is well spent and critical to MEU success while deployed.

Equally as important is family preparedness. On March 26 from 6:30-8:30 p.m., the 11th MEU Command Element will host its Pre-Deployment Brief at the South Mesa Staff Noncommissioned Officer's Club. We

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Peace...what do we do with it?

Chaplain Bruce Mentzer

A Marine private once came to me with an interesting problem: he was worried about what he should do with his “extra time.” I almost sent him to medical to make sure he was well, sane, and all there. No, not really, but it did raise an interesting issue for all of us. Just how do we grow when given the opportunity?

As a chaplain, I talk to basically three types of people. First, I see folks who I call the victims. They see themselves as victims or they are using others as victims of their own devices. They yell others into submission with the sole object of disconnecting the person and not allowing them to rebuild. Or they whine themselves into a corner with “how bad the world has been to them.” I find they blame everyone else for their decisions and conditions and make folks jump a little higher for their own amusement. The victims are prime ground for irresponsible drug and alcohol use. They are certain enemies of the human will.

Secondly, I find a group that I like to call survivors. They keep the basic rules and schedule to make it through the day. They consistently finish what they can for who they can. But, the survivors rarely find time to rest nor do they think of building their own legacy. In many instances, the stress level has overwhelmed them at one time in their life and, though they made it through, that is about all they can do now. They are survivors of bad times who now have a survivor’s instinct, a survivor’s list of dos and don’ts, and a survivor’s support group. They usually specialize in another-day-in-paradise sarcasm.

The third group, I call the growers. They somehow look for slices of time and work on themselves in important ways. They aren’t “surrounded by stupidity” nor overly burdened with

“people’s problems.” They make a home for themselves and others even when they don’t feel at home. They “have a mission” without “having an agenda.” Their goals expand on their care for themselves and others. And often their sights are on goals beyond this life that leave a legacy for those who follow. They surround themselves with training others, self-discipline, humility, and forgiveness.

Opportunities to grow surround us. They are not just the vacations to Disneyland and Legoland—though these are important times of growing fellowship for our friends and families. We can seek to grow more deeply academically, in our friendships, in ourselves, and with our God. We can serve our country and go beyond to serve our community.

A good friend of mine recently retired. Within a few months, he was helping where he worshipped, teaching at a local college, coaching a sports team, and running for county commissioner. I’m not sure I would recommend that to everyone, but it does show that the skills he learned while in the military, such as leading, worshipping, teaching, coaching, and supporting, are crucial.

I write this short piece to encourage you to ask which group you are in: victim, survivor, or someone who is growing.

I stand by to encourage you personally — and to help you wherever you’re at.

Chaplain Bruce Mentzer
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Pacific Pride



Key Volunteer Network Information

Upcoming KVN Meeting

February 23 from 9-11 a.m. at the KVN Center.

Pre-Deployment Brief

March 26 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Staff Non-Commissioned Officers Club. Babysitting will be provided.



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PACIFIC PRIDE

The Pacific Pride is produced monthly for the families of Marines and Sailors serving with 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit.

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have coordinated several speakers to come and present valuable information to you and your Marine or Sailor regarding the deployment, to include resources available to spouses and families when the MEU is deployed. While being separated during deployment is never easy, the information presented will serve invaluable in reducing or preventing hardships while apart. I strongly urge spouses to attend this valuable brief. The MEU will provide babysitting that evening to make it easier for families to attend.

Lastly, and with great regret, I have been notified that I will be leaving the 11th MEU in early March for a duty assignment in Washington D.C. While I will miss the MEU, this change of duty is what the Marine Corps has called me to do. I have spoken with the incoming commander, Col. Anthony M. Haslam, and I can assure you that he is as committed to the success and welfare of our Marines and Sailors as I have been. I will leave the 11th MEU with a heavy but proud heart, knowing I had the opportunity to serve with the best Marines and Sailors in the Corps.

In the many weeks ahead, the MEU will continue to be busy, focusing on new challenges and exercises. Kathy and I would like to say thank you to the spouses, family members and friends for their past support of the MEU. We have no doubt that this level of dedication will continue in the future. Recent events have only reinforced the fact that sacrifices made by the military community are important not only to the security of our country, but to the world.

Semper Fidelis

Charles S. Patton
Colonel, USMC

Don't forget to buy 11th MEU memorabilia...

Contact the Public Affairs office at 760-763-3512

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